



**DRAFT
Select Board
CDBG Subcommittee**

Date: April 15, 2020

Time: 10:00 AM to 11:15 AM

Location: Virtual Meeting Held Via Zoom

Minutes

Present: Adam Chapdelaine, Select Board Member Dan Dunn, Sarah Lee, Select Board Chair Diane Mahon, Chris Potter, Jenny Raitt, Toni Sacco, Erin Zwirko.

Jenny Raitt opened the virtual meeting by reviewing the process for remote participation in light of the state of emergency in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Jenny opened the public forum for those attendees that had comments.

Lynette Martyn noted that she is interested in the learning more about CDBG and the Town's response to the pandemic. She is glad to see a portion of the CDBG funds providing rental assistance. She suggested a number of ways to advise Arlington residents on its availability and requested information on the public comment period. She wondered if the information could be provided in multiple languages. Select Board Member Dunn explained that there will be time for public comment between this subcommittee meeting and when the final funding recommendation is made to the Select Board. Select Board Chair Mahon indicated that she is working with Jenny and the Town Manager to determine when the funding recommendation comes to the Select Board.

Lynette Culverhouse was curious about how the Town will obtain input from low- and moderate-income households and businesses. She also asked if there was a representative who was low- to moderate-income serving on the subcommittee.

Jo Anne Preston noted that the cross walk from Chestnut Manor over Chestnut Street to the Russell Common lot is unsafe. She stated that she has been discussing a potential project with the Arlington Police Chief on how to improve the crosswalk.

Jenny closed the open forum and provided an introduction of the CARES Act and the CDBG funding that will be allocated to Arlington. She noted that the process is still unfolding through HUD and the local Boston office, and noted that there are a number

of waivers provided to streamline the typical funding process. Jenny asked Erin to provide an overview of the current funding recommendations.

Erin noted that a memo has been prepared with the staff recommendations that cover three items to be discussed with the Subcommittee. The first is the CDBG-CV allocation that Arlington will be receiving in the amount of \$659,903. The staff recommends programming the funding for business assistance for microbusinesses, rental assistance, and for public services that are responding to the pandemic. She noted that the CARES Act removes the public service cap. Erin explained that a substantial amendment would have to be completed to program this funding, but a waiver is allowed to reduce the public comment period to no less than 5 days.

The subcommittee members recommended reducing the amount of funding per household that is eligible in order to help more households. There was also discussion regarding the fact that there is no equivalent eligible activity for homeowners and the care needed to prevent the duplication of benefits.

Erin then provided an overview of the Housing Corporation of Arlington's (HCA) request to cancel the \$150,000 solar project that was funded for this year. Erin noted that Ms. Hallett, HCA Executive Director, provided a letter explaining why the solar project is now infeasible, and that she requests that the funding be reallocated to the capital improvement program and to supplement HCA's Homelessness Prevention Program. Erin explained that this substantial amendment would be bundled with the amendment needed for the CARES Act funding. She also noted that the Homelessness Prevention Program is open to any Arlington resident, not just those who live in HCA units.

The final item to be presented to the Subcommittee is the reprogramming of prior years' funding to be able to support Arlington EATS and the annual curb ramp program. Erin explained that HUD provided a favorable response in support of funding the fit out of Arlington EATS new space at 117 Broadway. The subcommittee did not fund this project earlier this year because of ongoing conversations with HUD. Erin also explained that CDBG has historically funded the annual curb ramp program, but unfortunately, an application was not received from either the DPW or the Disability Commission. Jenny explained that these funds from prior fiscal years were programmed in FY18 to help restart the Housing Rehabilitation Program. The program struggled to restart over this past year and will not be able to move forward at this time. The funds will still need to be expended per HUD timeliness requirements, which is why staff are recommending reprogramming the funds. Both Select Board Chair Mahon and Select Board member Dunn requested semi-annual reporting on unspent funds, and recommended developing a policy regarding the use of unspent funds.

There was then discussion about Ms. Preston's comment about improving the crosswalk on Chestnut Street. The Town Manager reported that DPW will repaint the crosswalk as the paint is faded and worn. He also noted that the Town's transportation planning process suggests that Ms. Preston's letter (attached) will be forwarded to the Transportation Advisory Committee to make design recommendations for the crosswalk.

and street. Select Board Chair Mahon recommended that this should be an agenda item from the Select Board's April 27th meeting.

Following the completion of the discussion, Select Board Member Dunn made a motion to recommend funding of the three items under discussion with the amendment that the rental assistance be no more than \$2,000 per month for eligible households under the CDBG-CV projects. Select Board Chair seconded. Via a roll call vote, all members of the subcommittee voted yes.

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.

Attachments:

Email from Patricia Worden, dated April 14, 2020

Email from Jo Anne Preston, dated April 15, 2020

Email from Beth Melofchik, dated April 15, 2020

From: Patricia Worden <pbworden@hotmail.com>
To: "DMahon@town.arlington.ma.us" <DMahon@town.arlington.ma.us>, "arlington@arlingtonlist.org" <Arlington@arlingtonlist.org>
"DDunn@town.arlington.ma.us" <DDunn@town.arlington.ma.us>, "achapdelaine@town.arlington.ma.us" <achapdelaine@town.arlington.ma.us>, "jraitt@town.arlington.ma.us" <JRaitt@town.arlington.ma.us>, "christopher_potter@gse.harvard.edu" <christopher_potter@gse.harvard.edu>, "sacco@hds.harvard.edu" <sacco@hds.harvard.edu>, "sarah@sarahleeconsulting.com" <sarah@sarahleeconsulting.com>, Erin Zwirko <EZwirko@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: 04/14/2020 10:15 PM
Subject: More CDBG money for CORONOVIRUS-related problems

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Arlington's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the REAL sender (whose email address in the From: line in "< >" brackets) and you know the content is safe.

Dear Arlington List Members - following is a letter regarding additional CDBG money for Arlington to help with COVID-19 related problems which will be discussed at a CDBG Subcommittee meeting tomorrow -

Letter to CDBG Subcommittee with respect to CDBG Funding Enabled by the CARES Act (COVID-19 Relief)

To:
Diane Mahon, Chair, Dan Dunn, Vice Chair, Select Board
Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager
Jennifer Raitt, Planning Director
Appointed Subcommittee Members:
Christopher Potter
Toni Sacco
Sarah Lee

April 14, 2020

Dear Madam Chair and Committee Members,

It is gratifying to find that Jennifer Raitt in her Memorandum of April 13 entitled "Process and Timeline to Program CDBG-CV and other CDBG Funding" is recommending \$400,000 toward rental assistance which is of highest importance for low income families in this time of extreme stress.

I hope that such rental assistance together with the recommended business assistance will be implemented with due transparency, absence of conflict of interest, and inclusion of public participation in development of guidelines. It would be indeed be an improvement over the CDBG process of earlier this year if attention is given to members of the public who may be able to help. As you know, at one of your 8 a.m. subcommittee meetings which I attended Mr. Dunn refused to allow comment from any member of the public despite the sad Reverse Robin Hood decisions being promoted this year by the Administration to spend CDBG monies intended for low and moderate income families for a lucrative unnecessarily expensive landscape contract. I hope the Manager has ensured that appointed members of the CDBG Subcommittee are fully aware of the regulations underlying CDBG awards.

Also, with respect to the Funds to be Reprogrammed and, specifically, regarding the DPW Curb Ramp Program could I please suggest that you consider safety improvements for Chestnut Manor Residents currently under discussion by Jo Anne Preston and the Chief of Police?

Thank you for your kind attention,

Patricia Barron Worden

From: "Jenny Raitt" <JRaitt@town.arlington.ma.us>
To: "Erin Zwirko" <EZwirko@town.arlington.ma.us>, christopher_potter@gse.harvard.edu, sarah@sarahleeconsulting.com, sacco@hds.harvard.edu, "Dan Dunn" <dunster@dandunn.org>
Cc: DMahon@town.arlington.ma.us, DDunn@town.arlington.ma.us, achapdelaine@town.arlington.ma.us, dianemahon@verizon.net
Date: 04/15/2020 08:27 AM
Subject: Fwd: Proposal for Community Block Grant Subcommittee funding

Dear all,

Please see the email below regarding a proposal for use of CDBG funding.

Thank you,
Jenny

Jennifer Raitt
Director, Department of Planning and Community Development
Town of Arlington

From: JO ANNE PRESTON <ja-preston@comcast.net>
To: achapdelaine@town.arlington.ma.us, jraitt@town.arlington.ma.us, Dmahon@town.arlington.ma.us
Date: Wed, 15 Apr 2020 08:19:59 -0400 (EDT)
Subject: Proposal for Community Block Grant Subcommittee funding

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Arlington's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the REAL sender (whose email address in the From: line in "< >" brackets) and you know the content is safe.

Adam and Jenny,
I learned of this meeting and the additional federal funds at the Select Board meeting this last Monday. I conferred with Chief Flaherty yesterday and wrote up this proposal for discussion this morning.
Would you please send this proposal to the other members of the subcommittee?
Thank you,
Jo Anne Preston

TO: Adam Chapendelaine, Jenny Raitt and Community Block Grant Subcommittee

RE: Funding Request for Medford/Chestnut Street Traffic Calming Project

Summary: This proposal seeks \$125,000. In funding from the recently allocated funds for a consultant to research and design traffic calming measures at the pedestrian crossings at Medford/Chestnut Street intersections. For many years these crossings have been found to be increasingly dangerous by those who need to use them, most frequently by the over 100 low-income senior residents of the HUD Arlington Housing Authority building, Chestnut Manor.

The recent car accident which killed a senior citizen who was in the Chestnut Street crosswalk brought renewed attention to the need to improve pedestrian safety. Meetings with Police Chief Flaherty concluded that making physical changes in the street scape by employing traffic calming measures would be the most effective way to increase pedestrian safety.

This consultant would work with the traffic expert at CPCD, Department of Public Works, the Arlington Police Department, and representatives from the neighborhood including at least one from

the Chestnut Manor Tenants Association to design a plan which would result in greater pedestrian safety at the Medford street/Chestnut Street crossings. The Traffic Advisory Committee was not included because it already has a long waiting list of projects to review which means it would not be able to give this time-sensitive project its immediate attention plus its focus is on regulatory traffic controls.

Narrative: Over 100 low-income seniors live in the AHA's Chestnut Manor Building located at Medford Street and Chestnut Street. Bordered by Mount Pleasant Cemetery in back and a large apartment complex and other buildings on the left, the seniors must cross the Medford Street/Chestnut Street intersections to visit their churches, Arlington Center shops, and Whittemore Park.

These crossings have proven to be very dangerous with many near accidents and just last December 31st, a 70 year -old woman using a cane was killed in the crosswalk by a car traveling at the posted speed limit. She was on her way to mass at the Saint Agnes church.

This tragic accident brought needed attention to the problems with the intersections by the police department. The department began posting police cars there on a regular basis. Despite the attention of police, some residents have told me that they no longer leave the building.

A traffic calming project will eliminate the need for constant police presence by making physical changes to the street scape. These changes intentionally force drivers to slow down. Neighboring municipalities such as Somerville, Cambridge, Belmont, Lexington have successfully used traffic calming to increase pedestrian safety. These measures include raised crosswalks, speed tables, neckdowns, and in-cross-walks lights.

Police Chief Flaherty has been long concerned about these dangerous crosswalks and as the Town Meeting for precinct 9 in which these crosswalks are located, I have had a number of lengthy discussions with her about them, both in person and on the telephone.

In our discussions, we noted that since the car involved in the recent accident was traveling at the speed limit, no increased law enforcement would have prevented that accident or additional future accidents. Consequently, we reviewed a number of possible traffic calming measures that have been used successfully in other towns and concluded that a consultant could inform the town which of the possible measures would work best at these intersections.

In terms of availability of CBG funds, one possibility is that the \$125,000. for annual DPW Curb Ramp Program be delayed for a year and the monies put forward toward a Traffic Calming Program for the Medford Street/Chestnut Street pedestrian crossings.

These funds would allow the town to meet the immediate need of allowing low-income senior citizens to access their churches, stores, and parks. The DPW could contribute in-kind assistance from the engineering department and implement the design. The police department traffic division could contribute traffic statistics and regulation to aid the consultant in the study and act as organizational home. However, neither of them has funds available for a traffic calming study and design.

Jo Anne Preston
Town Meeting member Precinct 9

From: Beth Melofchik <tankmadel@yahoo.com>
To: Erin Zwirko <ezwirko@town.arlington.ma.us>, Jenny Raitt <jraitt@town.arlington.ma.us>, "dmahon@town.arlington.ma.us" <dmahon@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: 04/15/2020 09:36 AM
Subject: Questions to CDBG SubCommittee April 15, 2020

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Arlington's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the REAL sender (whose email address in the From: line in "< >" brackets) and you know the content is safe.

Dear Ms. Mahon, Ms. Zwirko, Ms. Raitt,

Can the meeting please be recorded? I understand Zoom offers this feature.

Will questions from the public be allowed during the meeting?

How did the SubCommittee come to the metrics in the memo? Specifically \$4000 figure quoted for rent?

Could members of the SubCommittee please be introduced to the public?

Thank you

Respectfully,
Beth Melofchik
Town Meeting Member